

Appl. No.: 10/591,717
Amdt. dated May 14, 2009
Reply to Office Action of February 19, 2009

Amendments to the Drawings:

According to the undersigned's understanding based on what was discussed in the telephone interview of May 11, 2009, the Examiner will withdraw the drawing objection made in the Office Action. Drawings were included in the PCT application of which the present application is a national-stage entry.

However, Applicant notes that the figures filed in the PCT application contain Japanese text. Accordingly, submitted herewith is a replacement set of drawings in which the Japanese text has been replaced with equivalent English text. No new matter is being added by the new drawings.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-4 are pending. Claims 1 and 2 were objected to for informalities. Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,896,503 to Smith.

Summary of Telephone Interview

The undersigned appreciates the courtesy extended by the Examiner and his supervisor in the interview conducted on May 11, 2009. In the interview, the undersigned explained that Smith lacks any bi-splitting device as claimed; nevertheless, the undersigned proposed amendments to Claim 1, substantially as set forth above, for clarifying that the bi-splitting and tri-splitting devices of the claimed invention take the same amount (i.e., the same width/height, or field of view) of incident light and split it into two or three, respectively. It was explained that Smith's device does not and cannot operate in this way.

Response to Claim Objections

Applicant has amended Claim 2 as suggested by the Examiner. Regarding the objection to Claim 1, Applicant does not agree that the claim should recite "relay lens group" rather than "relay lens". It would be understood from the specification that "lens" is not necessarily a single lens, but can include multiple lenses. Furthermore, Applicant desires Claim 1 to cover apparatuses in which there may be a single relay lens, whereas "group" connotes a plurality. Accordingly, the suggested amendments to Claim 1 have not been made.

Response to Rejections

As noted, Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the bi-splitting and tri-splitting devices are configured such that all of the incident light that is split into two split light portions by the bi-splitting device is split into three split light portions by the tri-splitting device.

In Smith's camera system, incident light comes through a front opening in a housing and optics in the housing split the light into three split light portions that are directed to three cameras, respectively. The housing has panels 41, 42 that can be slid to alter the size of the front opening in the housing. However, no positions of those panels would have the effect of the same amount of incident light, which was split into three by Smith's optics, being split into two split light portions by the optics. Thus, Smith's device does not and cannot operate in the manner that the apparatus of Claim 1 operates.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 1 is patentable over Smith. Claims 2-4 are patentable for at least the reason that they include all of the same limitations as Claim 1.

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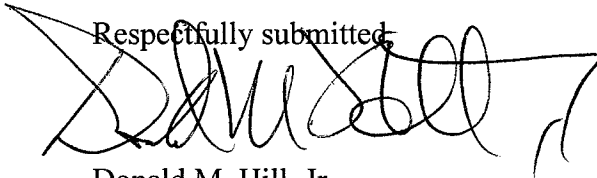
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Conclusion

Based on the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1-4 are patentable and the application is in condition for allowance.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefor (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donald M. Hill, Jr.', written over the typed name.

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